

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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R 030852Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8042

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NDP ENDS ASSEMBLY BOYCOTT

REF: (A) SEOUL 7634; (B) SEOUL 7698; (C) SEOUL 7254

SUMMARY: UNDER PRESSURES FROM WITHIN HIS PARTY AS WELL AS FROM GOVT KIM YONG-SAM HAS AGREED TO END NDP ASSEMBLY BOYCOTT. GOVT AND OPPOSITION ARE NOW ENGAGED IN ARGUMENT OVER SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS. IN SPITE OF TACTICAL RETREAT KIM STILL CONTINUING CAMPAIGN TO AMEND YUSHIN CONSTITUTION, WHILE WAITING FOR A BREAK IN POLITICAL SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. NDP PRESIDENT KIM YONG-SAM ANNOUNCED NOV 29 THAT PARTY HAD VOTED TO END NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BOYCOTT (REF C) AND RETURN TO ASSEMBLY DEC 3. DENYING CHARGES THAT HE WAS BACKING DOWN FROM HIS FORMER HARD LINE STAND KIM SAID THAT BOYCOTT HAD ONLY BEEN FOR 1975 BUDGET SESSION (WHICH ENDED DEC 1), AND THAT NDP WISHES TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERPELLATIONS IN ORDER TO FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUESTIONING KIM REAFFIRMED THAT NDP WOULD ALSO CONTINUE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY DRIVE TO REVISE CONSTITUTION.

2. SINCE BOYCOTT BEGAN KIM HAS BEEN UNDER INCREASING PRESSURES

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TO RETURN TO THE ASSEMBLY. OPPOSITION ASSEMBLYMEN HAVE

CONSISTENTLY DURING PAST WEEKS TOLD US THAT KIM WAS BECOMING ISOLATED FROM NDP MAJORITY WITHIN ASSEMBLY, PRIMARILY BECAUSE HE WAS TAKING TOO STRONG AN ANTI-GOVT STANCE AT A TIME WHEN GOVT WAS CLEARLY PREPARED TO BE MORE LENIENT (SEPTEL. KIM ACCORDING TO COLLEAGUES LET CONCERN WITH HIS PUBLIC IMAGE AS LEADING ANTI-GOVT SPOKESMAN CAUSE HIM TO MOVE TOO STRONGLY AND TOO QUICKLY. DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER OHM YONG DAL POINTS OUT THAT FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER KIM DAE CHUNG REMAINS FAR MORE CREDIBLE AND POPULAR AS CHIEF ROKG OPPONENT AND THAT KIM YONG SAM FEELS COMPELLED TO MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE. MOST NDP MEMBERS FEEL MOREOVER THAT EARLY 1975, WHEN ECONOMIC TROUBLES WILL HAVE MOUNTED, WILL BE A BETTER TIME TO TAKE ON THE ROKG. THEY ALSO EXPRESS BELIEF THAT KIM THREW AWAY PROTECTION AND PUBLIC FORUM PROVIDED BY ASSEMBLY FOR NO REAL GAIN IN RETURN. ASSEMBLYWOMAN AND KIM'S STAUNCHEST SUPPORTER, KIM OK-SON TOLD EMBOFF THAT PARTY DIVISION GOT TO POINT THAT KIM HAD BEEN FORCED TO THREATEN OTHER NDP ASSEMBLYMEN WITH PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS OF GOVT COLLABORATION IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THEIR SUPPORT FOR ACTIONS SUCH AS THE NOV 15 ATTEMPTED MARCH FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

3. OUR NDP CONTACTS REPORT THAT IN ADDITION TO INTRA-PARTY PRESSURES GOVT HAD BEEN PUTTING FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON PARTY BY PREVENTING OPPOSITION ASSEMBLYMEN FROM DRAWING PAY AND THREATENING STIFF TAX INVESTIGATIONS OF THEIR BUSINESS INTERESTS. DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER OHM, HOWEVER, SAYS GOVT DID NOT MAKE LARGE SCALE PAYOFFS TO NDP MEMBERS AND IN GENERAL HAS NOT PRESSED OPPOSITION TOO HARD, SINCE IT CALCULATED MOMENTUM WITHIN NDP WAS GOING GOVERNMENT'S WAY.

4. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON HAS WELCOMED NDP DECISION TO RETURN TO ASSEMBLY BUT GOVT AND OPPOSITION HAVE QUICKLY REENGAGED IN CONTROVERSY OVER ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE. NDP REQUESTED INTERPELLATIONS FOR ONE WEEK BEGINNING DEC 3 TO COVER FULL RANGE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES; THE GOVT WANTS TO LIMIT INTERPELLATION TO FINAL DAYS OF SESSION, DEC 16-18 AND HAS VOTED TO RECESS PLENARY SESSION UNTIL DEC 10. IN MEANTIME WITH ASSEMBLY IN RECESS GOVT AND OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE INTERPELLATION SCHEDULE.

5. KIM ANNOUNCED THAT DURING INTERPELLATIONS NDP INTENDS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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QUESTION GOVT ON CLOSING OF UNIVERSITIES, IMPRISONMENT OF POLITICAL AND CIVIL LEADERS, AND THE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS PARK AND FORD. HE CRITIZED GOVT FOR "OPPRESSING" PEOPLE UNDER GUISE NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOR STAGING PRO-YUSHIN RALLIES BY THE KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

6. NDP ASSEMBLYMEN HAVE CONFIRMED KIM'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN WILL ALSO CONTINUE. THE CORE OF

THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE THE DEDICATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CENTERS AT EACH NDP DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS. THESE DEDICATIONS WILL BE DRAWN OUT FOR MAXIMUM PUBLICITY OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS.

7. ALTHOUGH KIM HAS PRESENTED HIS RETURN TO THE ASSEMBLY AS PART OF HIS OWN CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE THE YUSHIN SYSTEM, IT IS RECOGNIZED IN POLITICAL AND PRESS CIRCLES THAT, RATHER THAN RISK A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP, HE FINALLY GAVE IN TO GOVT ASSISTED PRESSURES FROM WITHIN THE NDP. POLITICAL POINTS HE MAY HAVE GAINED AMONG STAUNCH OPPOSITIONISTS FOR LEADING THE BOYCOTT IN THE FIRST PLACE WERE AT LEAST PARTIALLY OFFSET BY PROLONGING HIS EFFORT BEYOND DESIRES OF MOST OF HIS PARTY FOLLOWERS, AND HE MAY HAVE LOST SOME RESPECT FOR HIS POLITICAL ACUITY. NEVERTHELESS, KIM HAS NOW RETURNED TO A POSITION FROM WHICH HE CAN KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE GOVT, BOTH FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY.

8. IN SUM, EVEN THOUGH KIM'S POLITICAL IMAGE HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT TARNISHED AMONG NDP ASSEMBLYMEN, FROM ALL INDICATIONS HE RETAINS STRONG SUPPORT AT GRASS ROOTS, AND THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT TO HIS PARTY LEADERSHIP. FOR TIME BEING WE EXPECT KIM WILL BE MORE CAUTIOUS IN LEADING THE NDP IN CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVT; HE WILL NOT WISH TO GET TOO FAR OUT AHEAD OF HIS NDP SUPPORTERS AGAIN, PARTICULARLY AS LONG AS GOVT ITSELF IS ADOPTING MORE MODERATE TACTICS AND ALLOWING FOR SOME DISSENT. INSTEAD KIM WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO POSITION HIMSELF SO THAT IF GOVT IS UNABLE TO HANDLE COMBINATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IT FACES, HE WILL BE PREPARED TO EXPLOIT SITUATION.

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